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Apayao OA5

APAYAO LIFE AND LEGENDS

THE PEOPLE OF APAYAO

WHEN you travel in the Philippines to the 131
northwesterly end of Luzon Island as far as Abulog; and then take a banca up the clear, warm waters of the Apayao River, as it meanders through dark tropical forests and amidst gorgeous mountains, you come into the lovely land of the Apayaos.

These virile people came here uncounted thou- 174
sands of years ago in two main migration waves; one- 144
the Indonesian-by way of Southeastern Asia; and the other-the Mongolian-by way of Central Asia. Here, in the northerly end of the Cordillera Central Mountains, these two waves converged, finding a new home with which they have ever since been well content. Their cultures amalgamated into a new one. Physically, the Indonesian strain dominated; but Mongoloid features of all the three short types are present, especially the short Mongol. According to the last cen- 161
sus they number 11,000.

You will like these people; for they are kindly, 181
hospitable, generous mountain lovers. They are high- 577
ly aesthetic in temperament, self-reliant, and honest. If perchance, you drop something, even money, on the trail, the finder will return it to you. They say that [586]
if a man steals, his wife will leave him: or, if they

yaos after the principal river in their country. Some say the word Apayao was originated in their fierce battle cry *"Ma-ap-ay-ao."* During this call the hand is clapped rapidly over the mouth so that the cry sounds much like the American Indian war-whoop. This cry is also used at a feast: when a new visitor comes, when the basi is brought in, and when a pig is killed.

I will endeavor to describe, from personal observation of its still numerous cultural remains, something of the life of the Apayaos as it no doubt existed little changed during the long centuries during which their folktales were formed.

The life of these people has much to do with the streams of the country along which most of them live. They do not live on the river flats, but on the mountain sides for safety. Many of their communities are named after the streams near which they are located. A considerable part of the food is obtained from the streams; and they are used for washing, bathing and swimming, as well as for scenery. Much of the transportation is on the streams, and the men are expert boatma nand raftsmen. During the heavy rainy season transportation on swollen rivers is perilous; but it is carried on somewhat. The result is that many a banca has over-turned in the roaring rapids; much valuable merchandidse still lies in the deep pools at the feet of those rapids; and many of family mourns the loss of a loved one. Therefore stories of the streams often occur in the legends of the people.

The people on each stream were isolated from each other for many centuries so that there has come to be quite a difference in their customs and dialects.